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### **Istook Secures \$1 Million Grant for OKC Auto Industry Workers** *Department of Labor announces retraining grant today*

Washington, DC -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-Warr Acres) announced today the awarding of a \$1 million federal grant to assist in the retraining of hundreds of workers displaced by the General Motors (GM) plant closing in Oklahoma City.

The grant, supplied through the U.S. Department of Labor, will serve nearly 300 salaried GM workers and 700 workers tied to GM suppliers in Oklahoma. Funds from the grant will be distributed through the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

**"These men and women are good workers," Istook said. "They need good jobs in Oklahoma and we need their productivity.**

The state has requested a larger amount and Istook said Chao assured him that other funds can be made available if needed.

**"They'll monitor the disbursement rate," Istook said, "and more could be forthcoming. Most workers already have assistance through the collective bargaining agreement and this gives help to those who do not. It is a sad fact is that the GM plant is closed. Learning new skills will help get those workers into good new jobs."**

**"Many of those people impacted by the GM closing have not been out of the workforce in a long time. The workforce has changed a lot in the last 10 to 20 years," said Rep. Istook. "This grant provides them with access to a number of much needed services including job retraining, career counseling and job search assistance."**

The retraining services include skills assessment, career counseling and career planning, education and skills training. Resources will also assist with relocation, out-of-area job search and other related supportive services.

Istook has worked diligently for months with Labor Secretary Chao and her staff to expedite the grant. The GM plant began layoffs on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

**"You and I have had many discussions about what we can do to help Oklahomans who are going through a very, very tough period in their lifetimes," said Chao during a February 16<sup>th</sup>**

Labor Committee Hearing. **“We thank you for your support, for your clarification. You’ve been terrific in helping us understand the local situation and know what the specific needs of your state [are].”**

The projects funded by the grant announced today will be operated in five local areas to include Big Five Community Services Inc., Durant; Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Board, Oklahoma City; East Central Workforce Investment Board, Shawnee; Norman Economic Development Coalition, Norman; and South Central Workforce Investment Board, Duncan, Okla.

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